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# International Legitimacy for Israel's Strategy in Conflict Against the Palestinians

by

Colonel Eran Makov
Israeli Armed Forces

United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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# INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY FOR ISRAEL'S STRATEGY IN CONFLICT AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS

by

Colonel Eran Makov
Israeli Armed Forces

Colonel (Ret) Carol Kerr
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

## ABSTRACT

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This paper analyzes the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, focusing on Israel's dual priorities -- the need for security and for legitimacy in this conflict. This paper seeks to identify options for IDF commanders to balance the nation's objectives for security and legitimacy. The paper will first examine the near-term history of Israel's military actions, Israel's position in the face of a campaign to undermine its legitimacy, and the challenges facing IDF commanders today. Then, a review of the situation today and the role of main actors in the arena will show the importance of the international legitimacy in the eyes of the Israeli population and suggest four options for the way forward. Subsequently, analysis of each option's risks and opportunities will indicate a recommended option that assist the military leadership to give for the political leaders the time and freedom to decide about the end, the means and the directions to solve this conflict.

# INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY FOR ISRAEL'S STRATEGY IN CONFLICT AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS

David Ben Gurion famously said that the destiny of Israel would depend on both her power and her justice.

> In all the generations from Joshua son of Nun and until now we always fought a few against many and even if we succeed to bring all the Jews to Israel we will still be a few against many. If we are just loyal to our destiny, history and our vision we will stand.[1]

On another occasion, David Ben Gurion said, "If we have to do the cursed job that is called war we should win and not lose."[2] These comments of the first prime minister of Israel and one of its greatest leaders reflect the main philosophy of the young Israeli nation: Israel believes its existence is righteous with justice on her side, and believes that she must prevail in every war.

This paper analyzes the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, focusing on the state's dual priorities — the need for security and for legitimacy in this conflict. This paper seeks to identify options for IDF commanders to balance the nation's objectives for security and legitimacy. To do so, the paper will first examine the near-term history of Israel's military actions, Israel's position in the face of a campaign to undermine its legitimacy, and the challenges facing IDF commanders today. Then, a review of the situation today and the role of main actors in the arena will show the importance of international legitimacy in the eyes of the Israeli population and suggest four options for the way forward. Subsequently, analysis of each option's risks and opportunities will indicate a recommended option.

This paper reviews references about the Israeli Palestinian conflict as a foundation to understand the current situation of military forces' options in the field. The

author's experiences, particularly from duty as a commander of a brigade in the West Bank, inspire the paper's intent to recommend politically neutral options for military forces. Because the conflict is sensitive and it touches nerves of the two nations in many perspectives – religious, historical, cultural and others – an apolitical recommendation for military activities is the best solution to give political leaders the time and freedom to decide about the end, the means and the directions to solve this conflict.

Background

In order to understand the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, it is essential to understand the roots of this conflict and landmarks in its history. This conflict has existed for more than one hundred years. But the idea of rebuilding the Jewish nation has existed all the time in the Jewish culture and was manifested in the desire of the Jews to come back to their country for over 2000 years. It got a big boost when Benjamin Zeev Herzl wrote his book "The Jewish State" in 1895 and founded the Zionist movement.[3] The establishment of the Zionist movement and the development of national movements all over the world at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century caused a rise of national Arab movements in the entire Arab world including Palestine.[4] The first blood conflict between Arabs from Palestine and Jews happened in the 1920 pogroms on Nebi Mussa day, when the Arabs attacked Jewish people and killed seven Jews.[5] In 1929, during the pogroms, 133 Jewish people were killed by the Arabs due to the high tension between them at that time. After the end of World War II and the Holocaust when the Jews were executed all over Europe, the idea to establish a Jewish state advanced significantly.[6] After the vote of the United Nations in 1947 for the separation program and the declaration of the Jewish state, Arab

countries started a war to destroy the young Jewish state. Through the first 30 years of independence Israel dealt with crucial conventional threats from the Arab countries.[7] The dynamics changed after the Six Days War, the founding of the Fatah and the Yom Kippur war. These events led to three fundamental changes in the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

1. Israel liberated the holy places in the West Bank and got over a million of Palestinians under her control; some of them are defined as refugees.
2. Arab nations started to accept the existence of Israel. They understood that the military option was not the only option and stopped planning the destruction of Israel.
3. The Palestine Liberation Organization was established as leadership for the Palestinians.

From this time on, the Palestinians' struggle against Israel included terror attacks on Israeli citizens, such as the murder of 11 Israeli athletes during the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, the hijacking of ELAL and the rescue operation in Entebbe and many other terror attacks inside and outside Israel.[8] In the 1970s, the PLO leadership situated their forces in Lebanon, launching both missiles into northern Israel and terror attacks against Israeli citizens. The situation changed after the operation for the liberation of the Galilee that is known as the first Lebanon War, in 1982. After this war the core of the conflict moved more and more to Israel and mainly to the West Bank. It manifested itself in the first Intifada, the Oslo agreement, and the arrival of Yasser Arafat and all the PLO leadership to the West Bank. From this time on the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians was characterized by two parallel patterns:  diplomatic talks and

negotiations between the two sides, simultaneous with extreme terror incidents against Israeli citizens, in which suicide terrorists were mostly involved.[9] This situation was conflicted for most of Israeli citizens; Israel's Prime Minister Yzhak Rabin had to talk about the "peace victims" and even coined the phrase, "treat the negotiations as if there is no terror and fight the terror as if there are no negotiations". This situation served as a background to two exceptional incidents: an Israeli terrorist named Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians in Hebron and a radical Jew named Ygal Amir assassinated Prime Minister Rabin. The balance changed after September 2000, when the second intifada started and Israel faced murderous terror attacks, which killed and wounded many Israelis and shook the personal security of society in Israel. The operation in 2002 in the West Bank known as the "HOMAT MAGEN ("Defensive Shield") operation and the building of the fence between the Israeli state and the West Bank destroyed the Palestinian security force as an effective power in the West Bank, put the IDF control of in Palestinian cities, struck the terror organizations, and restored the feeling of security to the Israeli people.

The death of Yasser Arafat in 2004 led to a new Palestinian leadership headed by Abu Mazen, the evacuation of the settlements from Gaza in 2005, the second Lebanon war in 2006 and the rise of the Hamas in Gaza. It motivated the two sides to reorganize the Palestinian forces and to act in joint interest to keep the security situation quiet. The joint goal has been to fight against the Hamas in the West Bank.[10] Parallel to this, another campaign was initiated by the Palestinians to undermine Israel's legitimacy in the eyes of the world. The campaign of "quiet protests" gained momentum against disputed areas in the West Bank, such as the fence and the settlements. These

demonstrations appear to be peaceful protests but typically include sporadic incidents of violence, like throwing stones and attacking soldiers. Gerald Steinberg, who referred to "the centrality of NGOs in promoting anti-Israel boycotts and sanctions," sees these protests as an organized campaign of the Palestinians and some other international organizations.[11]

In Gaza the situation is different. A terror organization controls the territory, with support by Iran which smuggles weapons into Gaza. These weapons threaten southern Israel. In Gaza the enemy is obvious, but the relationship with Hamas has changed after the 2009 operation "Oferet Yezuka," or "Cast Lead," and the publication of the Goldstone Report. Judah Ben Meir and Owen Alterman estimated that the Goldstone report was a great success for the movement in de-legitimizing Israel. It has harmed Israel, contributed to her defamation in the world, and will influence Israel and the IDF in the future.[12] Israel now deals with an enemy that continues active resistance and refuses to influence other groups to cease attack against Israel,[13] and simultaneously creates tension and dilemma for Israel by using civilians to protect itself and harm Israel's legitimacy in the world.

Current Environment

*Current Military Environment.* The military situation today is characterized differently in the two Palestinian arenas, Gaza and the West Bank. In both of them, the IDF operates in routine security missions but under different threats and different frictions.

The security situation, especially in the West Bank, has improved very much in recent years. After the years of blood and fights, since September 2000 Israel succeeded in stabilizing the security situation and decreased dramatically the number of

casualties. Security is Israel's primary pursuit, and a condition for all other objectives. From the author's experience as a brigade commander in the West Bank, his bilateral meetings with the Palestinian brigade's commander were centered around three courses of action — security, economy and diplomacy, and it was agreed that security was a condition that will enable all other factors to work.

In the West Bank, every day is a marked by low friction with a wide range of threats – skilled terror units that use demolition charges and send suicide bombers to crowded places; local terror factions characterized by tactics to kill Israelis without warning using simple weapons like knives, improvised guns and more; and individuals who attack citizens and soldiers with stones and cold arms. Both the IDF forces in the West Bank and the Palestinian Authority forces operate to thwart the attempts. But the IDF's guiding principle of freedom of action is complicated and strained by the requirement to coordinate with the Palestinian Authority.

When the security situation quiets, the IDF and other security forces can deal more effectively with law-breaking among all the populations in the West Bank. The security situation is measured not just in terror incidents but also in the level of the law breaking. In an environment with higher security, security and police forces can work more efficiently to create both security and safety from personal crimes. This situation demands actions from all authorities in order to arrest lawbreakers, bring them to court and put them into jail. Doing this to a young man who threw a stone or destroyed some property is much more difficult than to a terrorist, but acts of violence and vandalism can change the situation, light a fire, and return a region to violence.

In Gaza, the routine security situation moved much more extremely from routine to fighting. The forces must deal with high-risk threats, but low incidents. The forces operate within an environment of constant threat on Israel's southern cities and the knowledge that Israeli citizens have been targeted in retaliation for incidents in Gaza in which activists are injured. Hamas's ability to launch missiles into Israel influences governmental decisions on both sides.

*Current Diplomatic Environment*. The diplomatic arena has become complex on many fronts in the last five years. Israel does not recognize Hamas as a legitimate representative of Gaza; Israel's strategy is to isolate Hamas and Gaza through economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation.[14] Israel refers to Gaza as an entity that after 2005, when Israel left the Gaza strip, took responsibility for its own future. From Israel's point of view, if Hamas were a legitimate political regime, it would control Gaza and the attacks against Israel. So Israel's actions are against the Hamas. As Gian P.Gentile wrote about the 2009 operation in Gaza, "The Israeli army did not go into Gaza to win the hearts and minds."[15] Israel communicates with Hamas in Gaza through mediator factions as it did in bartering for the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and in brokering the last ceasefire agreements of 2009.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian strategy ended direct diplomacy and acts as if Israel itself is not a legitimate entity. It focuses on activating pressure on Israel through diplomatic actions with international actors.[16] This decision has complex and unusual effects, creating a situation in which there is not political process but there is much diplomatic activity at the operational, military level. This situation introduced terms like "diplomatic operational sphere," which means that the military is the medium to connect

with and talk with the Palestinian Authority — and the military will have to understand the limits of that role.

The diplomatic arena played out on other fronts due to the Palestinians' campaign to shape, and damage, the world's perception of Israel's responses to "quiet protests" every week in the West Bank, the flotillas to the Gaza strip, as well as initiatives against Israel in the International Court and the United Nations.

*Current Economic Environment*. Palestinian economic dependence on Israel in both Gaza and the West Bank is significant and derives from the security situation.[17] The improvement of the security situation in the West Bank causes more and more connections and improvement in the economy of the Palestinians. Trade improved, job numbers rose in the West Bank, and jobs are easier to get inside the cities of Israel. There is an increase in the Palestinian market and an increase in tourists from Israel and from the whole world. This dependence can be used as a restraining factor and any effort to strengthen or weaken those economic linkages is a strategic decision, especially in light of the Palestinians' efforts to boycott merchandise made in Israel, particularly in the settlements. The economic arena is not just the commercial relations between Israel and the Palestinians but it also links resources like electricity, water, gas and more.

Main Actors and Legitimacy

The main actors in the arena have relevant positions with respect to the two Israeli imperatives: security and legitimacy. Within Israel, both government and citizens are wary of undermining these imperatives – and they are attuned to other actors' reactions to its policies and actions. With the United States, for example, it is difficult to separate security and legitimacy issues, given that the U.S. political will to support Israel

through diplomatic means, weapons sales, and direct financial assistance is linked to U.S. perceptions of legitimate purpose. The perceptions of Israeli citizens, those of other nations, and non-governmental organizations about military and diplomatic actions to preserve security are intertwined, and influenced by each other and by media reports.

*Israel.* Israel finds itself in a very difficult and strange situation because it executes a difficult dual strategy. It rules over millions of Palestinians even as it works to ensure the security of Israeli citizens, by making sure that the extremism of Gaza does not repeat itself in the West Bank. After 10 years of "war and blood," Israel created conditions in the West Bank to enable a new set of state-like activities. A more stable security situation in the West Bank and an improved economy for the Palestinians made possible a change in the strategy of the Palestinian leadership, Fatah. This change of policy is expressed in the decision to abandon the option of terror and to focus on building state institutions and improve the economy.[18] Yet, Israeli memories of the second intifada – when Palestinian security joined the fight against Israel Hamas's missiles rained on the southern cities – create insecurity and doubt with Israel's citizens and government.[19]

So, the Israeli leadership functions between two possible political decisions: to control security in the West Bank while ruling over millions of Palestinians, or, to leave the West Bank and transfer the responsibility of this territory to the Palestinians. Israel has not decided yet about the end state for the political process in the West Bank and therefore its actions to date are defined by security priorities. For example, the separating fence in the West Bank came about from citizen demands in an uncertain environment. "Public opinion on the security barrier stems from overwhelming feelings

of fear, anger and emotion,"[20] noted author Tami Amanda Jacoby. The majority of Israel's society wants peace and a quiet life and, for most Israelis, peace means first of all secure borders without the threat of terrorism or invasion, as well as normal relations with all its neighbors.[21]

Within Israel are factions that influence internal politics and national security. Radical organizations of settlers have executed violent illegal actions that damage Israeli legitimacy in others' perceptions and challenge the Israeli political and military leadership. Radical right activists mutilate mosques and vandalize Palestinian olive groves; radical left activists protest with violence against IDF soldiers and officers. Those actions cause damage to Israeli legitimacy in the world and challenge the Israeli political and military leadership.

*The Palestinians*. In the last five years the Palestinian society divided into two different political groups located in Gaza and in the West Bank. The situation in Gaza developed after Hamas won the election in 2006, got control over Gaza and fought brutally against the Fatah until recently with bloody outcomes on both sides. Since then, Hamas consolidated its power and control in Gaza, in part by focusing missile threats and rhetoric against Israel. After the casualties suffered by Hamas in the 2009 Operation "OFERT YEZUKA" ("Cast Lead") in Gaza, Hamas allowed Islamic radical organizations to provoke Israel by shooting missiles from time to time, claiming deterrence against threats from Israel. Hamas tried to strengthen its position in the West Bank but has not succeeded thanks to the activity of the IDF and the Palestinian Authority.[22]

In the West Bank, the Palestinian President Abu Mazen and the Prime Minister Salam Fiaed blocked the influence of Hamas and responded to the Palestinian people, according to two main ideas.

The first priority is to build the basis for the Palestinian state by creating institutions that will allow the Palestinians to rule themselves, address the world to demand international recognition of an independent Palestinian state. The leadership started by recreating the Palestinian security forces and showing serious intentions to Israel, to the world (especially the USA), and to Palestinian society. Another basic foundation of the state is strengthening the economy, building financial institutions, building a court of law, fighting against corruption, and other institutions that will create the state. This is the same strategy recommended by David Ben Gurion for the establishment and recognition of Israel. Fiaed noted that the state of Israel was founded much earlier than the 1948 declaration, having been established as an idea from the beginning of the 20th century.[23]

As a second strategy, Palestinians in the West Bank actively seek to damage Israel's legitimacy in the world in an organized campaign described by Gerald Steinberg as a collusion of Palestinians and some non-governmental organizations.[24] Judah Ben Meir and Owen Alterman wrote about the perception that Palestinians, with support from the Arab and Muslim nations, use human rights agendas to empower this campaign.[25] This effort includes political deadlock, boycott on Israeli products, and violent protests about disputed issues like the fence and the settlements, and activation of international law against Israeli leadership. As an example, Neil Caplan wrote that, "Protest rallies and court action periodically challenge the legitimacy of the separation

barrier or security wall erected by Israelis. . . "[26] The Palestinian strategy rejects negotiation and instead promotes international recognition of a Palestinian state by attacking the legitimacy of Israel and its policies.[27]

*International Community.* The international community includes several groups of strategic importance for Israel. States with a stake in the conflict – USA, European nations, and Arab states like Egypt – are influential within Israel, and influential with others about Israel's legitimacy. Each state responds to its own values, interests and international relationships. They are among the main audiences judging Israel's legitimacy.

Non-state international groups include formally recognized groups like the Red Cross and the international civilian observer mission TIPH, that assist innocent people who suffer in violent conflict and speak for injustice; and ad hoc nongovernmental organizations (NGO) whose actions, like protesting against the West Bank fence and for the Gaza flotilla, have been damaging to Israel's legitimacy in the world.[28] Those groups are leading two main sets of international actions. The first is a combination of boycott, divestments and sanctions (BDS) and the second one is law warfare[29], using every opportunity to undermine Israel's legitimacy in the world.

In addition to governments, American and European citizens can be highly influential, even if they have inadequate understanding of the issues and of the effects of their actions. They are motivated often by media reports to contact their governments to question or influence their nation's policies and financial decisions about Israel. That fact alone makes media a significant set of actors in the international community.

The international community is not just a passive element, observing from a distance, but a dynamic factor with its own interpretations of the situation. The Goldstone Report is a profound example of this spiraling process and it is the most damaging defamation of Israel.[30] Judah Ben Meir and Owen Alterman detailed the efforts of Arabs and Muslim countries to persuade the UN Human Rights Council to open the official investigation into Israeli actions in Gaza in 2009 that ended in the Goldstone council and its report. They claimed that NGOs played a crucial role in drafting the report that accused Israel of committing war crimes.[31] The Israeli government decided against cooperating with the Goldstone council, and rejected its findings as incomplete and biased. The situation reflects a complex and challenging case of assessing the complexity of the international community as a system in which interests and ambitions can influence perceptions and conclusions.

*Israel and Legitimacy.* One of the main questions that can be asked is what is the importance of the world's perception of Israel's legitimacy? Can Israel survive without international commitment to its legitimacy? One might consider the economic implications of international rejection of legitimacy and the resulting rupture from the world. There is almost no example of a nation that survived successfully when confronted with international economic pressure. The Apartheid in South Africa that ended in 1990 is one example. The current situation in the Arab world is another example that reflects the challenge of dealing with embargo and international pressure. It is clear that Israel depends very much on the financial assistance that she gets from some nations in the world, especially from the USA, and that US assistance has made possible Israel's dominance in most domains and, of course, in the security domain. It

takes time, but international pressure is efficient in the end; most nations submit to the international pressure and to the damaged legitimacy of the nation. But those issues, important as they are, are not the main reasons why Israel cannot ignore the opinion of the international community.

Israel's commitment to state legitimacy is much deeper — linked to her roots and her psyche. When Benyamin Zeev Herzel wrote his famous book, "The Jewish State"[32] he wrote about solving the Jewish problem by finding a state for them like all other nations. Herzel was born into an assimilated family committed to the philosophy of citizenship. Herzel was aroused by the incident with Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish French Army officer who was judged and declared guilty with no evidence — and later exonerated. Second thoughts about Jewish assimilation inspired the idea for the book that launched the Zionist movement. "I do not think the Jewish problem is a social problem or a religious problem" wrote Herzel, and added, "And even if it looks like any other problem it is a national problem and in order to solve it there is a need to make it a universal problem that should be settled in the universal civilized council."[33] This quote demonstrates the importance of the international community — especially the developed countries — in Israel's claim for legitimacy. Israel cannot ignore the world because the philosophy of the state is based on being accepted and not banned and isolated. Moreover, the Jewish legacy is almost 3000 years of history based on the value of morals and justice. The Jewish heritage is stories of few against many, good against bad, and light against darkness. The stories of Moses fighting the Egyptian and liberating his nation from slavery to freedom, David fighting Goliath the Philistine giant, and Makabim in Hanuka are symbols of this idea and woven through Jewish and Israeli

culture. Israel will not risk isolation from the world, because she then risks the nation's values and society's survival.

Israel's moral roots are relevant to an emerging global phenomenon, especially in the developed countries that value legitimacy in war. Peter D. From, Douglas A. Pryer and Kevin R. Cutright wrote about global moral solidarity as an important modern development in the article, "War is a Moral Force." Arguing that morals and legitimacy should be a key concept in the USA doctrine, they wrote, "The difference today is that legitimacy is more likely to be based on shared moral perception: growing global moral solidarity. In the modern age, the narrative of 'victory' is more likely to be grounded in a story that makes its way around the planet at the speed of light".[34]

Israel does not have to bend to the moral pressure of the world, but Jewish tradition, its value of legitimacy, and moral issues in modern warfare among the developed countries, demand that Israel give it high priority. Israel needs to believe she's doing the right thing in the right way as much as she needs security. This is unlikely to be achieved if Israel ignores the philosophy and values of the enlightened world.

Israel's Strategic Options

The unique situation demands that Israel's leaders not only protect the security and safety of citizens but also conserve the legitimacy of Israel and to resist any attempt to isolate Israel within the world. The objective of the strategic level of security — IDF, General Security Service and other security forces — is to preserve a range of options for the political level and make it possible to freely make decisions. Israel can consider four strategic options to achieve that objective.

*Option 1: Ignore International Legitimacy.* In this option, Israel would ignore the pressure of international society and act according to its security needs. This option frees Israel to stop protests near the fence in the West Bank (as happens every week at Bileen), with aggressive actions against rioters. It would remove planning constraints about avoiding civilian targets linked to Hamas such as bases and headquarters.

This option is feasible, especially if we estimate that international pressure would have limited effect as long as the United States continues to support Israel. But this option is problematic with respect to acceptance and suitability. Israel cannot ignore the world, lose her legitimacy, and become isolated. Such a strategy would not only damage Israel in the world's eyes but will also tear and damage the unity of Israel's society.

*Option 2: Accede to International Pressures.* In this option, Israel would make international support the main goal and act primarily according to international opinion. An example occurred May 15th, 2011, when the Palestinians declared a day of mourning about the establishment of the state of Israel, which they called the 'Naqba.' The day began with large violent protests in the West Bank and at all borders. At one point, 3000 unarmed Palestinians from Syria tried to cross the border into Israel, while throwing stones at soldiers. Israeli commanders in the field permitted them to enter Israel and later moved them back to Syria, rather than stopping them with force and arms. If Israel were to make international pressure its primary planning considerations, security forces would avoid protestors. They would not block the flotillas that attempt to break Israel's economic blockade of Gaza, because the assessment of damage to Israel's reputation would outweigh the effects of letting them through.

This is also a feasible option but not acceptable nor suitable. Israel cannot trade security for international support. It creates risk that the end of deterrence could increase enemy capabilities and willingness to act by force against Israel. The second Intifada and the build-up to the second Lebanon war make clear that willingness and readiness to use force against Israel exists.

*Option 3: Balance Security and International Pressure.* In this option, Israel would act according to security priorities while paying attention to international opinion. As an example, Israel would stop a flotilla to Gaza but do so with minimal force. In another example, Israeli forces would accept more risk in the West Bank, minimize clashes with protestors, and take fewer offensive actions inside Palestinian cities.

This option is feasible, acceptable and suitable only when Palestinians take no offensive actions, and failure will create pressure to change the policy and return to aggressive actions that reject international opinion. This option creates a fine line for leadership between security needs and international pressure, requiring wisdom and sensitivity to manage the tension. The best outcome is that Israel merely manages the situation but does not influence or shape it. This option would preserve the existing tension.

*Option 4: Integrate Actions Across the Security, Economy, Legal and Diplomatic Domains.* While the other three options derive from the same logic, representing variations of the same framework (illustration 1), the fourth option represents a new logic. It is rooted in the concept of DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy) and tries to diagnose the problem in a multidimensional way (illustration 2).

This concept recognizes the multiple national elements – security, economy, law and diplomacy – that interact to create and influence the Israeli-Palestinian environment, and thus influence media reports and international opinion. All four sets of activities are relevant to international commitment to Israel's legitimacy and to Israeli society's sense of legitimacy. In turn, military activities executed to maintain legitimacy will preserve freedom to consider a range of options for the political leadership.

The four dimensions — security, economy, law and politics — are the basis for creating legitimacy for Israel, and the last three depend on the security dimension. Israel's President Shimon Peres captured the interrelationship when he said, "Poverty does not cause terrorism; terrorism causes poverty."[35] For example, when the IDF and other security agencies counter and deter threats, a better security environment enables free movement of trade and workers and fewer bureaucratic processes. In a secure environment with stable economic activity, there is greater ability to respond to violations of law such as plunder, robbery, assault. Beyond that, there is more opportunity for diplomacy: not just negotiation but problem solving for local issues and troubles, such as chronic housing shortages. Acting in those four dimensions will influence not just the environment of the people but also the way that the media reports the situation and, in turn, the support and the interest of the international community. This strategy requires not only actions but adequate reports and communication across the four dimensions so as to shape opinion about legitimacy inside Israel and within the international community. Resources will be needed. More importantly, integrated processes will be needed to integrate actions across the four domains.

This option is feasible, acceptable and suitable and it enables Israel to control the conflict and influence the situation. However, this option comes with its own unique set of leadership challenges.

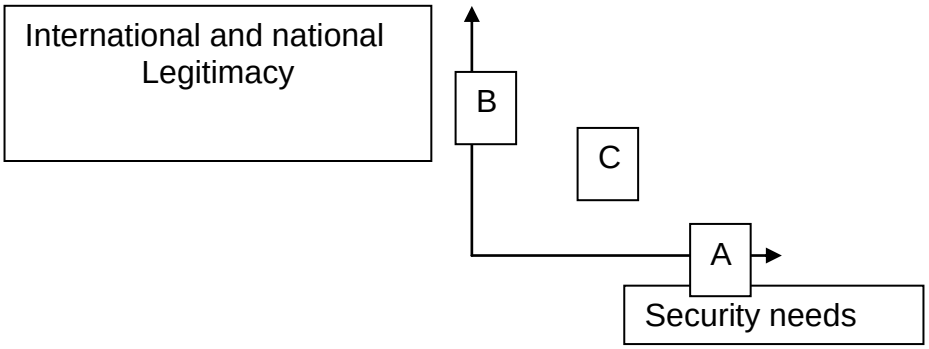


Figure 1. Framework no 1.

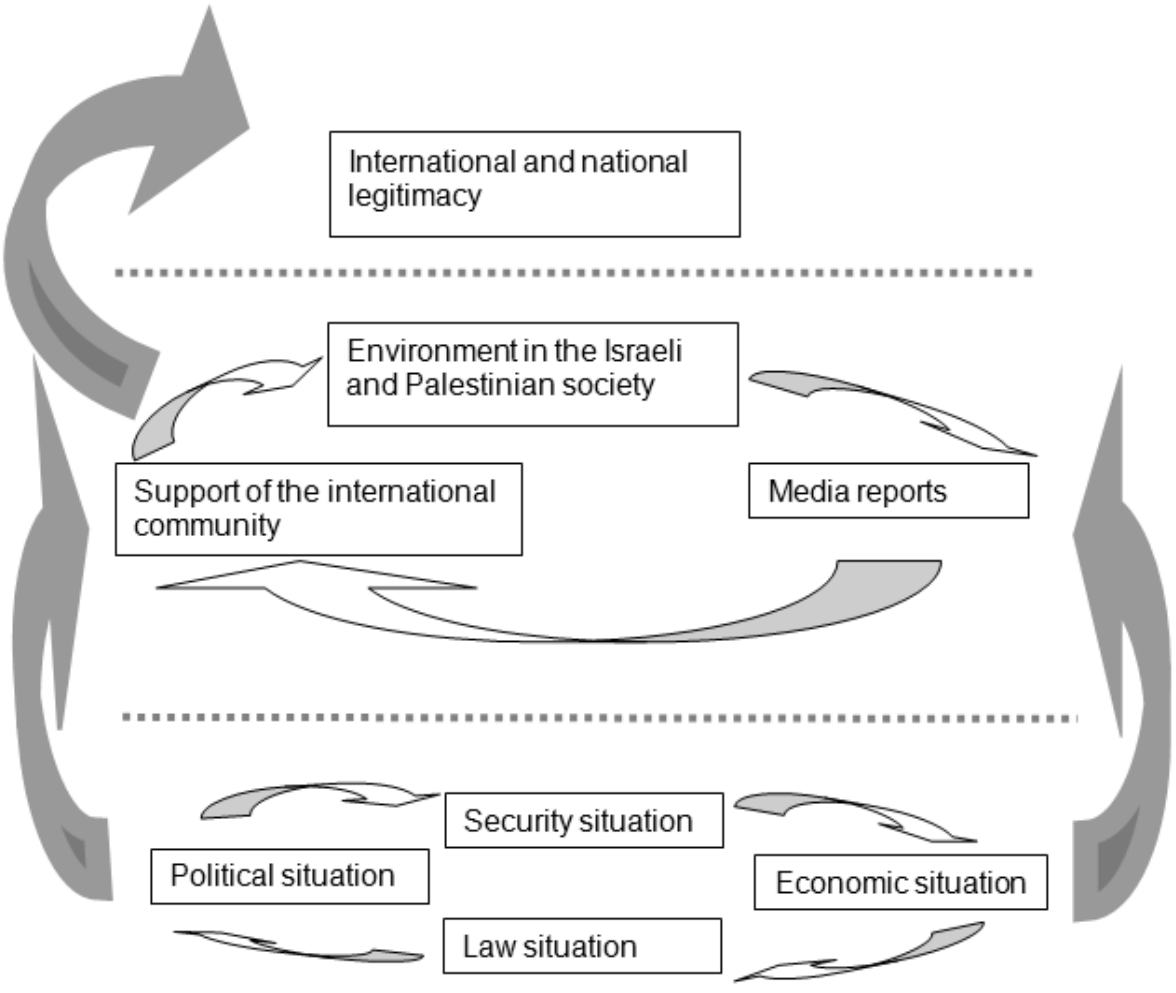


Figure 2. Framework no 2.

*Leadership Challenges with Option 4.* The unique conflict between Israel and the Palestinians creates challenges for the strategic military leadership. All four options share challenges such as investigating and understanding the conflict, and complexity of command and control in this conflict. But the fourth option introduces additional, unique challenges that are a result of the broad view essential to this option. The first challenge is to exhaustively apply all means available to the strategic leader; and the second one is to communicate effectively with all the different players in the conflict.

In the first challenge, the strategic leader needs to build team cohesion in order to apply all means that are under his hand. The special strategy of this option compels the use of all the armed forces. It is essential to integrate all intelligence agencies and to create synergy with the police, military legal factors, rear-area forces and other security units. This situation requires that the strategic leader work with a team principle. Dr Stephen J. Gerras and Col Murray Clark provide insights: "Though we emphasize the need for leaders to cultivate collaboration and create synergy, our depiction focuses attention on "the task" as the driving force that carries through the model. The task aligns activities in a hierarchical organization such as the Army, whose main competitive advantage is consistent high performance/mission accomplishment,"[36] as is exhibited in the model on page 123.[37] Aligning military forces under the same task and turning them into a cohesive team is relatively easy, compared to creating an interagency team across different organizations like the police and the intelligence agency. It can be said that these forces have somewhat different missions but their goals are usually the same. The wisdom of the strategic leaders will be to successfully create a single team focused on one main goal, and from there, create synergy.

The cooperation between IDF and the General Security Service during warfare in Gaza and in the West Bank is a good example of cohesive teamwork. This cooperation is being executed in the new conflict in the West Bank against the violent protests that occur there. It is crucial for the military, the police, the civil administration and other factions to work together and create a complete action with better outcomes.

The second challenge deals with strategic communication and the factors related to the conflict. Arguably, this is Israel's principal challenge; Israel has failed to communicate effectively to the different factions inside and outside the situation.

Media coverage of the Goldstone report about the 2009 operation in Gaza, "Cast Lead", clarifies the importance of strategic communication to maintaining legitimacy in modern warfare. Quotes like these have influenced Israeli citizens and outside communities: "The Gaza military operation were directed by Israel at the people of Gaza as a whole, in furtherance of an overall policy aimed at the civilian population."[38] And, "Israeli forces also humiliated, dehumanized and carried out an assault on the dignity of the people in Gaza, through the use of human shields, unlawful detentions. . . "[39] Media reports such as these reflect poor success in Israel's efforts to communicate and influence the unbiased media coverage. Those results caused many arguments in Israel about the way that it should act and respond to the Goldstone report, and inspired senior Israeli journalist Ron Ben Ishay to compare the Goldstone report to the failure in the Yom Kippur war, calling this report the "Yom Kippur of the Israeli explanation."[40]

The multitude of factions and players increase the complexity of the conflict and multiplies the difficulty in deciding how and what to communicate. The Israeli people, the Palestinian people, Hamas, Fatah, international actors, the media, the peace

activists, human rights organizations, and others are elements that are involved in this conflict and demand distinct communication treatment. Past actions have included use of financial leverage, appeals to human rights, and media advertisements. These efforts were local in influence and met only tactical success.

The model suggested by Dr. Stephen J. Gerras could be useful for the strategic leadership in this fourth option.[41] This is to arrange the different factions in four groups according to the group's interest and its power with respect to the conflict. For example, the Palestinian people have high interest and high power in the conflict. That is why strategic leadership should find a way to better communicate with them, so as to clarify the Israeli perspective, such as the costs of maintaining the conflict. The international community would occupy a different position in the model – with low interest but high power – which indicates a communication strategy with clear, short, consistent messages that satisfies questions about justification for Israel's actions.

Defining the factors for strategic communication is essential, but strategic communication is a much broader tool in this conflict. As mentioned in Joint Publication 3-0, "These elements, in conjunction with specific tasks in the plan or order, help guide and regulate joint force actions when communicating and interacting with the local populace, inter-organizational partners, and media, and they support other relevant objectives."[42] And, as is written in the Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication, "Strategic communication is like an orchestra producing harmony — all instruments retain their unique sound and specialty, but communicate more effectively in concert."[43] Both of these references characterize strategic communication as a very complex issue that demands good integration. It also demands engagement, as the

former U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen wrote, “We cannot capture hearts and minds. We must engage them; we must listen to them, one heart and one mind at a time-over time.”[44] From my own experience, we can add four other principles important for success in strategic communication:

- Honesty: do not lie but tell the truth even if it is not pleasant to hear.
- Equality: communicate from an equal position, even if the power is in your hands.
- Action: be an agent of action; recognize that talk with evidence is inadequate .
- Availability: try to be available to your allies.

In the end there are good examples from the IDF activity in the conflict with the Palestinians. Knowing and living in the territory allows the Israeli security forces to succeed in communicating with some factions in the conflict, like the Palestinian security forces. In spite of this, the lack of analysis of Israeli and IDF strategic communication and the absence of educational material about strategic communication, like the U.S. Army has developed, makes strategic communication a weakness for IDF and other security forces in this conflict.

## Conclusion

The changes in the long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians about the right to live and to rule Israel's territory demanded that Israel adapt her activity in the last years. Israel is dealing in recent years not only with a threat to her existence but a threat to her legitimacy as well. The history, the tradition, and the culture of the Jewish people as a nation make it impossible for Israel to live without legitimacy within its own society and within the enlightened international community.

That is why Israel should modify its actions and try to influence this campaign. The delay of the political decision about conflict resolution should not interrupt the security forces and especially the IDF, which control and are responsible for the West Bank, to improve its actions in response to the ongoing campaign to undermine Israel's legitimacy in the world. The fourth option, proposed by this paper, allows Israel to enterprise and lead actions in that campaign, instead of responding to the activity of the other side. The option requires that Israel integrate planning and action among its four key activities of security, economy, law and political action. All these actions can take place at the strategic level of the army, while remaining politically neutral, so as to achieve the objective: to preserve a range of options for the political level and the time and freedom to develop and create support for its decisions. The main strategic leadership challenges unique to this option are two: the requirement to exhaust all capabilities and resources to integrate its actions across all security forces for coordinated activity; and the strategic communication needed to effectively communicate with the right factions at the right time. This fourth option will require that IDF build a plan for this option, reorganize the military structure to enable changes in operations, train commanders at the strategic level to understand this option, and act according to it.

Clausewitz said that, "War is but a continuation of policy in other forms."[45] James Nathan offered a more complex definition: "Force, to be judged successful, needs to be informed by more than a narrow definition of the national purpose."[46] These two quotes take on deeper meaning in light of the Israeli condition described in this paper. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians demands now that Israel defines force in an

expanded way. For Israel, war is not just a continuation of policy; war and policy must act together complementarily at the same time and in the same arena. Israel must deal with the campaign against her legitimacy as an existential threat and show the world her justice and morality regardless of a political resolution. In his book "the Jewish State," Herzel's words express the concept for Israel's future:

> I once called Zionism an indefinite ideal and I truly believe that after we achieve our state, the land of Israel, it won't cease to be an ideal because Zionism, as I understand it, includes not only legal aspiration for the promised land for our miserable people but also an ambition for moral and spiritual completeness.[47]

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